

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BG

SUBJ: MAULANA BHASHANI UNDER HOUSE ARREST

SUMMARY-ELDERLY OPPOSITION LEADERS MAULANA BHASHANI AND ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN WERE TAKEN INTO POLICE CUSTODY BRIEFLY JUNE 30 TO PREVENT AN ALL-PARTY UNITED FRONT PROCESSION AND RALLY AT THE PALTAN MAIDAN IN VIOLATION OF SECTION 144. MAULANA BHASHANI WAS TAKEN TO HIS VILLAGE HOME IN TANGAIL WHERE HE IS NOW UNDER HOUSE ARREST; ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN WAS ESCORTED BY POLICE TO HIS DACCA RESIDENCE. THIS LATEST OPPOSITION MOVEMENT SO FAR HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE PUBLIC SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

1. FOR THE PAST MONTH, THE ALL PARTY UNITED FRONT OF SIX OPPOSITION GROUPS HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO BUILD A MOVEMENT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. LEADING FIGURES ARE MAULANA BHASHANI OF NAP/B, ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN OF THE JATIYO LEAGUE, OLI AHAD OF THE SPLINTER JATIYO LEAGUE, HAJI DANESH OF THE RECENTLY FHRMED PEOPLE'S LIBERATION UNION, AND AMAL SEN OF THE BANGLADESH COMMUNIST PARTY (LENINIST). THE RE-IMPOSITION JUNE 26 OF SECTION 144 BANNING PUBLIC GATHERINGS IN DACCA UPSET THE OPPOSITION FRONT'S PLANS FOR A MASS RALLY ON JUNE 30. THE SUPREME COURT REFUSED THE FRONT'S APPEAL FOR A TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF 144. ALTHOUGH MUJIB SENT MAULANA BHASHANI A TELEGRAM ASKING HIM TO POSTPONE THE MEETING OUT OF A RESPECT FOR LAW, THE MAULANA ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 29

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ATTEMPTED TO LEAD A SMALL PROCESSION. POLICE BROKE UP THE PRO-

CESSION AND ARRESTED SEVERAL PEOPLE. AT 2:30 A.M. THE NEXT MORNING, THE MAULANA WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AT THE DACCA HOME OF MASHIUR RAHMAN, NAP/B GENERAL SECRETARY, AND DRIVEN TO HIS VILLAGE HOME IN SANTOSH, TANGAIL DISTRICT. THAT AFTERNOON, ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN LED OUT ANOTHER PROCESSION. HE AND SEVERAL OTHERS WERE ARRESTED AT THE BAITUL MUKKARAM WHERE POLICE AND RAKKHI BAHINI WERE MASSED. ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN AND THE LONE NAP/B MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, SALAHUDDIN, WERE ESCORTED TO THEIR HOMES BUT STILL IN JAIL ARE OLI AHAD AND MASHIUR RAHMAN AMONG OTHERS. THE OPPOSITION FRONT CLAIMS THAT THE POLICE RAIDED THE HOMES OF PROTEST LEADERS AND ALSO ARRESTED POLITICAL WORKERS WHO WERE ATTEMPTING TO DEFY SECTION 144 IN OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. THE OPPOSITION FRONT CALLED FOR A HARTAL IN DACCA JULY 2 WHICH FAILED COMPLETELY. A COUNTRY WIDE HARTAL HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR JULY 5.

2. BDG INSISTS THAT NEITHER THE MAULANA NOR ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN WERE ARRESTED AND THAT POLICE GUARDS POSTED AT SANTOSH WERE REQUESTED BY THE MAULANA FOLLOWING A RECENT ATTEMPTED ROBBERY. BHASHANI, HOWEVER, IN A LETTER TO MUJIB COMPLAINS THAT HIS HOUSE IS CORDONED OFF BY "COUNTLESS" POLICEMEN WITH EVEN THE LATRINES AND STABLES GUARDED. CALLING HIS TREATMENT BY MUJIB'S REGIME "INHUMAN TORTURE" AND THE WORST HE HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED TO IN HIS LONG CAREER, THE MAULANA ASKED MUJIB TO PROVIDE SEPARATE HOUSING FOR THE POLICE SO THAT HIS FAMILY CAN HAVE SOME PRIVACY. BHASHANI ALSO DEMANDED PUNISHMENT FOR THE POLICE WHO "ATTACKED" HIS PROCESSION JUNE 29 AND THE RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL WORKERS ARRESTED.

3. THE BDG OVERREACTED TO THE THREAT POSED BY THE UNITED FRONT. IN ADDITION TO THE LARGE CONTINGENT OF POLICE AND RAKKHI BAHINI AT THE PALTAN MAIDAN AND THE NEARBY MOSQUE ON SUNDAY, RAKKHI BAHINI IN SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS WERE POSTED THROUGHOUT DACCA TUESDAY MORNING FOR THE HARTAL THAT FAILED TO MATERIALIZE. BDG TENDS TO RESPOND DISPROPORTIONATELY TO ANY ORGANIZED OPPOSITION, BUT ITS OVERREACTION MAY HAVE BEEN IN PART CAUSED BY THE AIRPORT INCIDENT JUNE 27 WHEN BDG MINISTERS WERE SLIPPED AT THE TIME OF BHUTTO'S ARRIVAL (DACCA 2966). THE UNUSUAL CONCENTRATION OF RAKKHI BAHINI ON TUESDAY VERY POSSIBLY SERVED THE DUAL PURPOSE OF INTIMIDATING NOT ONLY THE OPPOSITION FRONT'S SUPPORTERS BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH HAD EMBARRASSED BDG SO SEVERELY BEFORE BHUTTO.

4. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 29 AFTER HIS PROCESSION WAS DISRUPTED, BHASHANI REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF THE POLICE TOUCHED HIM PERSONALLY, THE COUNTRY WOULD BE SET ABLAZE. IT HAS NOT BEEM. THE ALMOST TOTAL LACK OF SUPPORT FOR THE PROCESSION AND HARTAL DEMONSTRATES THAT HOWEVER UPSET THE PEOPLE MAY BE WITH THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT, THEY DO NOT GIVE ACTIVE SUPPORT TO PRESENT

OPPOSITION LEADERS. JUST AS THE YOUTHFUL LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL
SOCIALIST PARTY (JSD) FAILED TO EXCITE ANY FOLLOWING DURING THEIR
AGITATIONAL CAMPAIGN IN FEBRUARY, SO NOW THE VETERAN POLITICIANS
ARE NOT SEEN AS AN ALTERNATIVE.
BOSTER

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